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AUTHOR Hughes, William
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ABSTRACT

Ohio substance abuse policies, discipline codes, and educational drug abuse prevention programs are reviewed. An effective substance abuse policy is an essential element in the school's efforts to deal with drug and alcohol use. In many U.S. schools, the use of alcohol and drugs interferes with the education process, and it appears that substance abuse prevention programs in schools over the past 20 years have had little impact. The background of the problem and the role of the federal government in the development of school substance abuse policies are reviewed. The issue of student athletes and drug testing is discussed, and two relevant court cases are reviewed. The effects of the Vernonia decision are discussed. To study drug abuse policies in Ohio, high school principals were surveyed. A questionnaire was designed addressing demographics, substance abuse policy elements, substance abuse education options, school and community support, athletic policy considerations, and policy effectiveness. Results are presented for each question in a table format. Findings are discussed and policy implications are drawn out. Guidelines for principals' use in developing substance abuse policies are proposed. (Contains 16 references.) (EMK)

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICIES IN OHIO SCHOOLS

William Hughes

Ashland University

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Substance Abuse Policies in Ohio Schools

The sixth National Education Goal states, "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." Surveys within the last few years show, however, that we are far from that goal. Substance abuse continues to be a major problem in American schools affecting children of all economic backgrounds and from every geographic region. In many schools, the use of alcohol and other drugs interfere seriously with the education process (Aleem, 1993). It appears that substance prevention programs in schools over the past 20 years have had little impact on the problem.

The Federal government has been a leading force in causing substance abuse programs to be developed in the schools. The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, as amended (20 U.S.C. 3191-3197; expires September 30, 1999) targets school-age public- and private-school youth. The Act provides for student training and instruction, staff training and development, student support services, purchase or development of instructional materials, training for parents and community members, community awareness and coordination, and needs assessment and evaluation. Student services include (1) improving students' knowledge, attitudes, and values about drugs; (2) developing students' decision-making skills and self confidence; (3) developing students' social and interpersonal skills; (4) enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff involved in drug prevention programs; and (5) referring and counseling students with problems. In addition the Act requires schools to possess comprehensive substance-abuse prevention policies and programs in order to be eligible for federal funding.

The most recent Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll "of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" (Rose, Gallup, Elam, 1997) cites the use of drugs and dope as one of the biggest

problems with which the public schools must deal. Interestingly enough, even though drugs are seen as a serious problem, a majority of the respondents indicated a satisfaction with the schools' efforts to combat drugs. While the respondents indicated that an educational approach is an effective way of dealing with a drug problem, they also felt that schools should have a zero-tolerance drug and alcohol policy, which means that possession of any illegal drugs or alcohol by students will result in an automatic suspension.

An effective substance abuse policy is an essential element in the schools' effort to deal with drug and alcohol use. Gaustad (1993) finds that students whose schools lack clear alcohol and drug policies are more likely to use or experiment with chemical substances. The substance abuse policy makes a public statement that educators are aware of and concerned about the problem. Policy establishes long-range goals and sets an overall tone that supports specific actions.

Substance abuse policies often include a philosophical statement about the schools' position on substance abuse, a discipline code specifying what constitutes a drug offense, intervention assistance that can be provided to substance abusers, and curriculum or educational drug abuse prevention programs. In addition, student athletes come under close scrutiny through policies included in athletic codes of conduct. A few school districts have instituted mandatory random drug testing for student athletes as a part of their substance abuse policy.

Discipline Code

Almost all public school districts address drug use in their overall discipline policies. Most substance abuse policies have evolved in two distinct directions: (1) the adoption of a strong "zero tolerance" approach leading to strong punishments like long-term suspension or expulsion;

and (2) the recognition that policy enforcement is not an end in itself but must be combined with rehabilitation. Aleem (1993) says that a distinct advantage of a policy of zero tolerance is that it gives many students a safe haven - an opportunity to say no in a setting where being drug free is the norm and drug use is prohibited.

Parents tend to support strict substance abuse policies. Many school districts have developed school policies that contain severe consequences for the possession of drugs or alcohol at school. The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll (Rose, Gallup, Elam, 1997) asserts that 86 percent of the people polled support a zero-tolerance policy calling for automatic suspension of students carrying alcohol or drugs into school.

Educational Drug Abuse Prevention Programs

Virtually all substance prevention programs include an information component to address the consequences of substance use. Drug and alcohol prevention programs have been used in schools since the 1970's. The strategies of early programs were to provide information to the students. Evans and Bosworth (1997) report that research indicates that for a variety of reasons, schools have been largely ineffective in their prevention efforts. However, they suggest that twenty years of research on drug abuse prevention has yielded effective strategies and a broad range of curricula.

The most popular drug education program and the one used in more American schools than any other program is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program commonly known as Project DARE. Project DARE's main audience is fifth- and sixth-graders who are taught a standardized curriculum by a uniformed police officer one hour per week for 17 weeks. Students learn about the consequences of drugs and alternatives to drugs and practice decision-making

skills. Project DARE is administered to a reported six million U.S. students at a cost of $750 million. About 25,000 police officers have been trained nationwide. Ennett (1994) reports that in spite of this effort, evaluations of the program's long term impact on students' drug use have shown it to be ineffective.

A number of commercial programs with significant potential for prevention based on the results of rigorous evaluations are now available to schools. Some examples are Life Skills Training (LST), a program for seventh graders; Alcohol Misuse Prevention Study (AMPS), a program designed for grades six through eight; Project ALERT; and Project Northland. (Evans and Bosworth, 1997)

Student Athletes and Drug Testing

The athletic program is a vital part of a school's educational program and student-athletes are important members of the student body. Student-athletes are often leaders in the school and are respected by their peers. In addition, athletics and student-athletes are highly visible in the community. They are often perceived as representatives of the school at athletic events and in the community at-large.

Student-athletes are encouraged to maintain a high level of physical fitness. Consequently, the use of alcohol and drugs has a profound effect on their level of performance. Substance use may pose a risk of injury or even long-term harm to self and others. Substance abuse may substantially increase the risk of sports related injury.

Because of the special relationship that exists between student-athletes, the school, and the community, many schools have developed athletic substance abuse policies in addition to the policies for the general student population. Often these policies contain provisions that go beyond

the general school policies. In recent years, schools have begun to explore the possibility of including random drug testing as a part of their athletic policies. Walsh (1998) points out that drug testing of students appears to be gaining momentum on several fronts across the country. However, it appears that it will be some time before drug testing of student-athletes becomes commonplace.

The basis for the schools' authority to perform drug testing derives from two Court cases. The first, New Jersey v. T.L.O., involved an infraction of school rules, which escalated into a criminal offense when marijuana and drug paraphernalia were found in the student's purse. The incident provided the Supreme Court with an opportunity to determine the applicability of the Fourth Amendment to a school setting and to identify the level of suspicion which could trigger a legitimate search. The Court determined that the Fourth Amendment did apply to school officials but reduced the level of suspicion from probable cause to reasonable grounds. The Court developed a two pronged test for reasonableness. First, the search would have to be "justified in its inception" and secondly, once initiated, the scope of the search would be defined by the reasonableness of the methods used. Included in the decision was a reiteration that students bring an expectation of privacy with them into the school but this expectation of privacy is not that of adults.

The second case, Vernonia School District v. Acton, involved a challenge to an Oregon school district's program of random urinalysis testing of middle and high school athletes for use of such illegal drugs as marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines. The Court ruled that public school student athletes can be required to undergo drug testing even if they are not individually suspected of using drugs.

A number of issues surfaced as a result of the Vernonia case. The majority opinion focused on the privacy issue. Justice Scalia, writing for the majority, said that "students who voluntarily participate in school athletics have reason to expect intrusions upon normal rights and privileges, including privacy." He continued by suggesting that the invasion of student athletes physical privacy would be negligible and nearly identical to those typically encountered in public restrooms.

Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote a dissenting opinion in which she stressed her belief that the Constitution permits drug testing only of those students for whom officials have an individualized suspicion of drug use. She questioned the district's choice of student athletes as the lone group subjected to suspicionless testing. She contended that it would seem to be more reasonable to focus on the students found to have violated school rules against disruption in class and around campus.

Pittman and Slough (1996) describe the mandatory drug testing program developed by the Vernonia school district. The policy applied to all students participating in interscholastic athletics. Students wishing to play sports had to sign a form consenting to the testing and had to obtain the written consent of their parents. All athletes were tested at the beginning of the season for their sport. In addition, once each week of the season, the names of athletes were placed in a "pool" from which the names of 10 percent of the athletes were selected for random testing.

The student to be tested completed a numbered specimen control form. The student then entered an empty locker room accompanied by an adult monitor of the same gender. Boys produced the urine sample at a urinal while girls produced samples in an enclosed bathroom stall. After the sample was produced, it was given to the monitor who checked it for temperature and

tampering and transferred it to a vial.

The numbered samples were sent to an independent laboratory which tested them for amphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana. The lab was authorized to mail written reports only to the superintendent and to provide test results to district personnel by telephone only after the requesting official recited a code confirming his authority. Only the superintendent, principals, vice-principals and athletic directors had access to test results.

If the sample tested positive, a second test was administered as soon as possible to confirm the results. If the second test was negative, no further action was taken. If the second test was positive, this constituted a second offense under the policy. The athlete's parents were notified, and the school principal convened a meeting with the students and his or her parents. The student was given the option of participating for six weeks in an assistance program that included a weekly urinalysis, or suffering suspension from athletics for the remainder of the current season and the subsequent athletic season.

Using the results of the Vernonia School District's drug testing program, Pittman and Slough (1996) advise that the following characteristics could determine if a particular drug testing program will support a reasonableness test:

1. Presence of drugs in the school
2. Failure of other preventive measures
3. Input from parents
4. Drug testing a target group
5. Advance notification by written policy
6. A listing of substances to be tested for

7. Limited access to results (Superintendent, Principal, A.D., Parents)
8. Use of an adult monitor to secure samples
9. Observation of urination by same-sex monitor at or near the collection site
10. Providing medical information by student prior to testing
11. Use of accurate procedures and laboratory tests
12. Emphasis of the program on counseling, education, and rehabilitation.

Not everyone agrees that the use of random, suspicionless drug testing of student athletes will minimize the use of drugs among minors. Taylor (1997) states that not only does random drug testing invade the privacy of a group of students who are relatively unlikely to use drugs, but it also discourages athletic participation and may actually lead to an increase in overall drug use. Even in those cases where the adoption of such testing leads to a reduction in overall drug use, compensating behavior by student athletes guarantees that the reduction in use will be smaller, perhaps much smaller, than expected.

Research Questions

The review of the literature related to substance abuse programs indicates that many school policies contain provisions for drug and alcohol education, discipline for drug and alcohol offenses and separate provisions for student athletes. From this literature review, several research questions were identified:

1. What are the common elements found in Ohio high school substance abuse policies?
2. What types of substance abuse education programs are provided?
3. What level of support does the school receive from teachers, staff and community

for administering substance abuse policies.

4. How does Ohio high schools deal with substance abuse by student athletes?

5. How extensive are random mandatory drug testing programs in Ohio high schools?

Methods

A fifteen-item questionnaire was developed for Ohio high school principals. The questionnaire addressed demographics, substance abuse policy elements, substance abuse education options, school and community support, athletic policy considerations and policy effectiveness. An additional question was included for schools engaging in a random mandatory drug testing program.

It was decided that one-tenth of the Ohio high schools would be surveyed. Consequently, questionnaires were mailed to 75 randomly selected from a stratified sample. The stratification was based on the three school district types in Ohio: city, local and exempted village.

Surveys were mailed to the selected high school principals. A self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed. Of the 75 questionnaires mailed, 54 were returned for a response rate of 72 percent. Questionnaires were received from 17 high schools with enrollments less than 400, from seven high schools with enrollments from 401 - 699, from 14 high schools with enrollments form 700 - 999, and from 16 high schools with enrollments greater than 1000. The largest number of respondents classified their schools as rural schools. The responses from each demographic category were so similar that the data is presented in aggregate form.

Results (See Table 1)

Table 1
Survey Responses

Question	Responses				
1. What is an estimate of the size of your high school?	Less than 400 17	401 - 699 7	700 - 999 14	1000 or greater 16	
2. How would you classify your school?	Urban 9	Suburban 16	Small City 7	Rural 22	
3. Which of the following components are a part of your drug/alcohol policy?	A "zero tolerance" discipline policy. 46	An assistance program. 47	A drug/alcohol curriculum component. 38	Prevention activities coordinated with the community. 35	
4. Indicate the elements that are found in your drug/alcohol policy.	Written form for students and parents. 54	Covers many drug/alcohol circumstances. 39	Specifies the consequences for policy violation. 48	Effectively communicated to students and parents. 48	Consistently enforced. 50
5. Identify the drug/alcohol curriculum program used.	DARE 29	LST 2	ALERT 1	Local 26	BABES HOOLA T455A ON TASC
6. To what extent are teachers and staff involved in the implementation of your policy?	Actively involved and supportive 23	Moderately involved and supportive 17	Supportive 15	Not involved 1	
7. To what extent are parents and the community involved in the implementation of your policy?	Actively involved and supportive 8	Moderately involved and supportive 27	Supportive 15	Not involved 4	

8. How effective is your drug/alcohol policy-program?	Very effective 15	Moderately effective 36	Not very effective 3

Student Athletes

9. Does your athletic handbook contain a drug/alcohol policy?	Yes 54		No	
10. When an athlete violates the drug/ alcohol policy the first time, the focus of the penalty is:	A rehabilitation program 1	Discipline (suspension from team, etc.) 5	A combination of rehabilitation and discipline 48	
11. For second and subsequent violations, the focus of the penalty is:	A rehabilitation program 1	Discipline (suspension from team, etc.) 36	A combination of rehabilitation and discipline 17	
12. How effective is your athletic drug/alcohol policy in curtailing drug/alcohol use among athletes?	Very effective 20	Moderately effective 32	Not very effective 2	
13. Has your school considered a random mandatory drug testing program for athletes?	We have not considered such a policy. 42	We are considering such a policy. 4	We considered the policy but decided not to implement it. 6	We have implemented a random mandatory drug testing program. 3

Schools considering (or have considered) a random mandatory drug testing program

14. What prompted you to consider a random mandatory drug testing program?	A drug problem in the student body. 3	A drug problem with athletes. 3	A drug problem in the community. 3	Other- - Giving the perception of zero tolerance - To give athletes a reason to say "no" - Proximity to major cities - Looking at all options

Schools who considered but did not adopt a random mandatory drug testing program

15. What were the reasons for not adopting a random mandatory drug program for athletes?	The policy was not needed. 1	The cost of implementing the policy was prohibitive. 7	The policy would have been difficult to administer. 6	The policy would have violated student rights. 2	Other- - Questioned the effectiveness as a deterrent - Community resistance

Responses from schools who have adopted a random mandatory drug testing program (Two rural schools with a student body of less than 400 and a suburban school with a student body population between 700 and 999)

If your school has instituted or is in the process of instituting a random mandatory drug testing program, please respond to the following questions.

16. It is suggested that the following elements should be considered when developing a random mandatory drug testing program. Please comment on how your policy addresses or addressed each of the elements.

a. Presence of drugs in the school

- We wanted to prevent a problem.
- Primarily a community problem - not a school problem.
- Reports from coaches and team members.

b. Failure of other preventive measures

- We did not consider other preventive measures.
- Students were on an honor system.
- Ordinary discipline measures weren't working

c. Input from parents

- Parent Advisory Committee suggested it.
- Parent meetings held, information shared at Board of Education meetings.
- Set up a community task-force including parents, administrators, teachers, students, coaches, school nurse, school physician, board members, law authorities, and ministerial representatives.

d. Advance notification by written policy

- Students and parents must sign consent form.
- Reports of meetings were shared with the community.
- Open community meetings were held.

e. A listing of substances to be tested for

- All substances are listed although we do not test for all each time.
- Yes, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, barbiturates
- Tests for alcohol, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, barbiturates, cocaine, LSD, marijuana, methadone, nicotine, and opiates.

f. Limited access to results (Superintendent, Principal, A.D., Parents)

- Results limited to principal, drug counselor, and parent.
- Parents are notified by medical review officer. Athletic director informed of positive results only.
- Results limited to building principal, parent, student, and athletic director.

g. Use of an adult monitor to secure samples

- The doctor that tests bus drivers secures the samples.
- Yes - lab conducts testing.
- Yes, an adult collector is present.

h. Observation of urination by a same-sex monitor at or near the collection site

- We leave all testing procedures up to the doctor's office.
- The laboratory collects the samples.
- Yes

i. Providing medical information by students prior to testing

- Yes - verbal and written proof of medication is required if test is positive.
- Yes - students provide a list of medications prior to testing.
- Documentation of medications taken is required.

j. Use of accurate procedures and laboratory tests

- Yes - the lab is State approved for bus driver testing.
- Yes - the lab is an approved facility.
- Yes - a recognized laboratory is used.

k. Emphasis of the program on counseling, education, and rehabilitation

- Yes - our goal is not to catch but to deter.
- Yes - drug awareness coordinator and school counselor are involved as a component of drug testing policy.
- Only on the second and subsequent positives is disciplinary action taken.

Every high school indicated they have a substance abuse policy. The vast majority of respondents said their policy contained a "zero-tolerance" discipline policy, an assistance program for substance offenders and a drug-alcohol component of the curriculum. A smaller number of respondents indicated their school's substance abuse efforts were coordinated with the efforts of community organizations.

The largest number of schools reporting a drug/alcohol curriculum use the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program. Locally developed curriculum efforts were reported by a significant number of schools. Other programs used by schools included LST (Life Skills Training), Project ALERT, and BABES (Beginning Alcohol Basic Education Series).

All of the responding schools reported that their policy was in written form for parents and students. Nearly all of the schools included many of the drug/alcohol circumstances that might be encountered and the consequences for policy violations. The school reported that their policies were consistently enforced.

Most schools reported that teachers and staff were actively or moderately involved in the implementation of the school's substance abuse policy. Teachers and staff were seen as supportive of policy efforts. The community plays a less active role in the implementation of substance abuse policies but the majority of schools indicated a major role for the community.

Schools rate their drug/alcohol policy-program as very effective or moderately effective. The responses to this question suggest that school principals are fairly satisfied with the results of their substance abuse prevention efforts and do not believe that drug/alcohol abuse problems are as severe as reported in the media.

With respect to athletic drug/alcohol policies, every school utilized an additional athletic policy for student-athletes. The athletic policies tend to focus on rehabilitation and discipline for first offenders but required stricter discipline measures for second and subsequent offenses. Again, principals rated their athletic substance abuse polices as very effective or moderately effective.

Random mandatory drug testing of student athletes is a controversial issue in schools around the country. Few schools in this sample had even considered such a policy. Only three of the reporting schools indicated they had implemented a drug testing program. The other schools who had considered such a policy stated that they decided against such a policy because of cost, difficulty of administration, and a concern over violation of student rights.

Discussion

Information on school substance abuse policies is important given the recent expansion of school board responsibility for dealing with the abuse problem. Most schools have adopted and implemented policies which include four major components: one for disciplinary procedures which specify how infractions should be treated; a second for curriculum which specifies the educational program(s) used with students; a third for intervention which delineates procedures for identifying and referring students with problems; and a fourth dealing with community partnerships. Teachers, staff, parents and community members are involved in the development and implementation of substance abuse policies. This joint effort appears to produce programs which are effective in dealing with substance abuse problems.

Because of their special relationship with the school and community, student-athletes are subject to additional scrutiny. Substance abuse policies written for student-athletes tend to focus

on rehabilitation and, if substance abuse continues, discipline practices. Athletic policies appear to be effective in curbing substance abuse problems with student-athletes.

Very few schools have adopted mandatory random drug testing for athletes because they are not needed, the cost is prohibitive, they are difficult to administer, or they violate student rights. Few additional schools are expected to join the ranks of those engaging in drug testing programs.

It appears that the high degree of implementation, the comprehensiveness and the positive features of school substance abuse polices should result in a greater capacity for schools to handle substance abuse issues in constructive and appropriate ways. The existence of comprehensive school substance abuse policies can be expected to result in declining use and fewer drug/alcohol related problems. The satisfaction with school substance abuse policies on the part of high school principals is certainly an indication that such policies are having the desired effect.

Policy Implications

The results of this study and the suggestions of a number of other policy makers (Empey, 1993; Gaustad, 1993; Huertas and Sullivan, 1995; OERI, 1993; Rosen, 1992; Virginia Dept. of Education, 1992) lead to the conclusion that successful substance abuse policies combine comprehensive prevention efforts, the creation and maintenance of a disciplined environment conducive to learning, the development of family partnerships, the assurance of a community focus on prevention efforts, and concern for the highly visible and vulnerable student athlete. Drawing from these sources, the following guidelines for high school principals are suggested:

1. Formulate age appropriate, developmentally-based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs for students. The programs should address the legal, social

and health consequences of drug and alcohol use, and provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs or alcohol.

2. Include a strict *no use* statement that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol will not be tolerated on school grounds and at school functions. Expected standards of conduct that are uniformly applicable to students should be covered by the policy.
3. Include a clear statement of disciplinary sanctions consistent with law. Disciplinary sanctions might include expulsion and referral for prosecution.
4. Include information about drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation and reentry program opportunities for students.
5. Develop a comprehensive substance abuse policy for student-athletes. Consider the use of drug testing as a deterrent to substance abuse.
6. Include a statement of who is responsible for implementing and enforcing the policy.
7. Provide a role for students in the development and communication of school policy. Create opportunities for parents to share experiences and support one another.
8. Coordinate school efforts with those of local authorities and social agencies.

Conclusion

Findings from this study indicate that most schools have implemented comprehensive drug policies. These policies commonly include a discipline component, an educational component, an assistance program and activities coordinated with community efforts. Additional efforts are

directed toward student-athletes. Generally, the principals felt that the drug policies in their schools were effective. However, more can and should be done. Greater vigilance in identifying problems, earlier effective educational programs, earlier intervention and consistent enforcement of discipline may help contribute to freeing schools from drugs. Schools cannot solve the problem alone. The problem extends to the home and community. Therefore, any truly effective drug policy must include parents, students, and community agencies in its development, implementation and enforcement.

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